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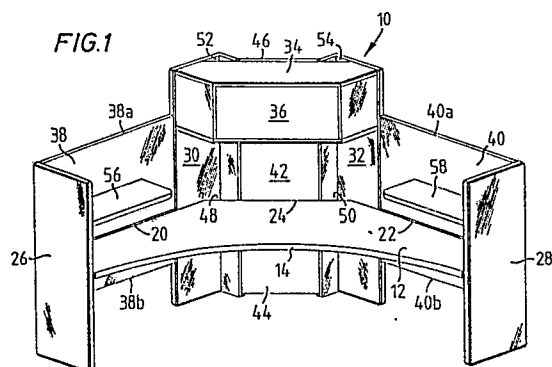
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⑤④ **Improvements in furniture.**

⑤⑦ Furniture suitable for use in offices and the like. A workstation comprises a worksurface having a constant radius front edge, first and second end edges extending from the front edge substantially at right angles to each other, first and second support members fixedly secured to the worksurface in the vicinity of the first and second end edges respectively and at least one further support member fixedly secured at a further edge of the worksurface.



Description

IMPROVEMENTS IN FURNITURE

This invention relates to furniture suitable for use in offices and the like.

Traditionally offices have been equipped, *inter alia*, with separate, stand-alone desks but in recent years the need for greater efficiency and communication, particularly in open-plan offices, has seen the introduction of so-called "workstations". Such a workstation can provide a relatively large work surface with ample space to receive typewriters, computers or visual display units (V.D.U.s) their keyboards and the like.

In addition, a need has been perceived for additional visual and aural privacy. Consequently, portable screens of sound-absorbing material can be provided and arranged around desks and workstations to provide some measure of privacy.

According to the invention there is provided a workstation comprising a worksurface having a preferably constant radius front edge, first and second end edges extending from the front edge substantially at right angles to each other, first and second support members fixedly secured to the worksurface in the vicinity of the first and second end edges respectively and at least one further support member fixedly secured at a further edge of the worksurface.

The worksurface may comprise first and second side edges extending from the first and second end edges respectively, substantially at right angles to the end edges and to each other and in converging directions.

The side edges may be truncated and interconnected by a rear edge to provide a cut-away or recessed rear corner. This facilitates the placing of the workstation against an obstruction such as a structural column, the positioning of four such workstations in a star-shaped configuration around such a construction and so on.

First and second said further support members may be provided of substantially L-shaped or right-angled cross section configuration fixedly secured to the worksurfaces in the vicinity of the junctions of the first side edge with the rear edge and the second side edge with the rear edge respectively. By the use of such further support members voids are left between the worksurface and the support members through which electrical cables and the like can be passed.

Connection means can be connected between the said two further support members to provide additional stability to the structure.

The connection means may be a cupboard.

The invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of one embodiment of a workstation according to the invention;

Figure 2 is a plan view of the workstation taken above the worksurface;

Figure 3 shows four workstations arranged in

a star configuration.

Referring to the drawings, there is shown a workstation 10 comprising a single-piece worksurface 12 having a front edge 14 which describes a substantially constant, inwardly directed radius curve over its full length, two end edges 16, 18 extending substantially at right angles to each other, two side edges 20, 22 extending from the end edges 16, 18 respectively substantially at right angles to their respective end edges and to each other so that they converge but do not meet, being truncated by a rear edge 24.

The worksurface 12 is supported by first and second end support panels 26, 28 fixedly secured to the end edges 16, 18 respectively and first and second substantially L-shaped support panels 30, 32 fixedly secured to the side edges 20, 22 respectively at their junctions with the rear edge 24. These panels may be fixedly secured to the worksurface in any suitable way, for example by means of softwood blocks (not shown) which are secured to the undersurface of the worksurface and bolted to a respective support panel.

The panels 26, 28, 30, 32 not only support the worksurfaces and play their part in maintaining the rigidity of the structure but also provide some privacy screening for the user of the workstation. The panels 26, 28, 30, 32 can be provided on their lower edge surfaces with adjustable feet or the like (not shown) to facilitate levelling of the workstation on uneven floors.

A cupboard 34 is fixedly secured, as by bolts (not shown), to the support panels 30, 32 and provides added stability to the structure. It can be provided with an up-and-over door 36 which runs the full width of the central face of the cupboard. The cupboard is of sufficient height above the worksurface 12 to allow a V.D.U. and drive unit to be located underneath. The internal height of the cupboard is sufficient to allow office files to be accommodated in an upright position.

Fixedly secured between the support panels 26, 30 and 28, 32 are further panels 38 and 40 respectively which can also be attached to the worksurface 12 in the vicinity of its side edges 20, 22 respectively. The panels 38 and 40 also add to the stability of the structure and provide privacy screening.

The panels 38, 40 terminate at their upper edges 38a, 40a at about the same level as panels 26, 28, the height being such that a seated person at the workstation is screened, but a standing person can see over them. The panels 38, 40 terminate at their lower edges 38b, 40b at a level between the undersurface of the worksurface 12 and the floor. This is to provide for an adequate free flow of air around the workstation 10.

Removably secured between the panels 30, 32, the worksurface 12, and cupboard 36 is a panel 42. This panel 42 allows cables and the like to pass under it to the space behind and can accommodate

various electric socket outlets.

Removably secured between panels 30, 32 and below the worksurface 12 is a further panel 44. This panel 44 also allows access to the space behind the workstation and can accommodate various socket outlets.

When the workstation 10 is positioned so that the rear can be seen a further removable panel 46 can be mounted on panels 30, 32 in spaced parallel relation to the panels 42, 44 to form a cavity therebetween to accommodate cables and the like.

The triangular voids 48, 50 between the worksurface and panels 30, 32 facilitate the provision of services such as cables and the like to pass above and below the worksurface.

Similar voids 52, 54 are provided between panels 30, 32 and the cupboard 34.

Two shelves 56, 58 are each mounted as shown by means of two metal dowels (not shown) fixed to protrude from the panels 26, 28 respectively and into an end of the corresponding shelf, and a metal support bar (not shown) which extends from the associated panels 38, 40 to support the other end of the shelf.

The panels will generally be of solid construction and chipboard with a decorative timber veneer face and matching hard wood lippings. Alternatively the panels can be constructed by utilising framing of wood, metal, or plastics with an infill of similar or contrasting material.

The rear screen panels 38, 40 should be constructed to allow a degree of acoustic absorption and be able to receive pins for use as a pin board although, of course, these features are not essential to the invention.

Two such workstations can be arranged side by side and it will be realised that a plurality could be arranged in line. A further plurality could be arranged in line back to back with the first plurality and spaced therefrom to create a corridor or walkway therebetween.

Referring to Fig. 3 there are shown four workstations 10 arranged in a star formation.

A useful feature of the design of the workstation 10 is the recess 60 formed by the external faces of the panels 30, 32 and 42 or 44. For example the open recess 60 can be used to accommodate a structural column often found in office buildings, or merely a decorative item such as a pot plant. The octagonal space 62 provided by the arrangement of four workstations can also be used to accommodate a column thus making the design of the layout of the office easier.

A workstation according to the invention can have one or more of the following novel features:-

1. A worktop having a curved front working edge around two arms at right angles, allowing a clear uninterrupted work area free from intermediate legs or joins.

2. A combination of varying screen heights in one fixed piece of furniture.

3. A workstation having a shaped cut-out in the rear corner allowing it to be placed in various positions around and adjacent to obstructions such as structural columns. For

example, four workstations when grouped together in a star configuration can combine to form an octagonal void in the centre by virtue of the recesses or cut-outs, so allowing this cluster to be located around a column.

This recess void area can provide other benefits of wire management and can accommodate lighting and power cables when the workstation is used in a cluster formation.

In the open plan the shaped recess or cut-out gives a novel appearance to the desks viewed from the rear when organised singly (i.e. on a corner) in pairs and in threes. When arranged in pairs, two of the backs "line up" to form a corridor and the two adjacent cut-outs join together to form a sculptured back with vertical emphasis and visual excitement.

4. The space under the panels 38, 40 is provided in order to allow a free flow of air under the workstation and is beneficial to the efficient functioning of office air conditioning systems.

5. The shape and location of the high level cupboard is unique. It is situated at such a height that a V.D.U. screen and drive unit can be accommodated under it and at the same time it provides a degree of shading to reduce reflection and glare on the V.D.U. screen. The shape is such that when four workstations are grouped together in a star configuration the cupboards group together to form an octagon. When the workstations are clustered in groups and a number of groups are located together in a large open plan area the visual effect is of screens below eye level separating the working areas, with the octagonal high level cupboards rising above eye level. It is believed that no other workstation provides this combination in this manner.

6. Triangular voids at the rear of the worksurface can provide for:-

- access for fixing clamps for accessories
- passage for large wires, plugs and connectors etc.

- air flow to ventilate equipment on the desk

The voids continue above the equipment behind the top cupboard.

7. The wire management is unique in the way in which the workstation provides for:-

- storage of excess cables including the tails from sockets to the actual items (lights, telephones, etc.)

- coping with all currently known office equipment wiring systems

- providing simple flexibility in the provision of socket outlets at various locations above and below the workstation in any combination.

8. The design allows for the provision of shelves attached at one end of the inside face of panels 26, 28 either above and/or below the worktop and supported by a cantilever rod from panels 38, 40 at the other end.

9. The provision of shelves below the worktop.

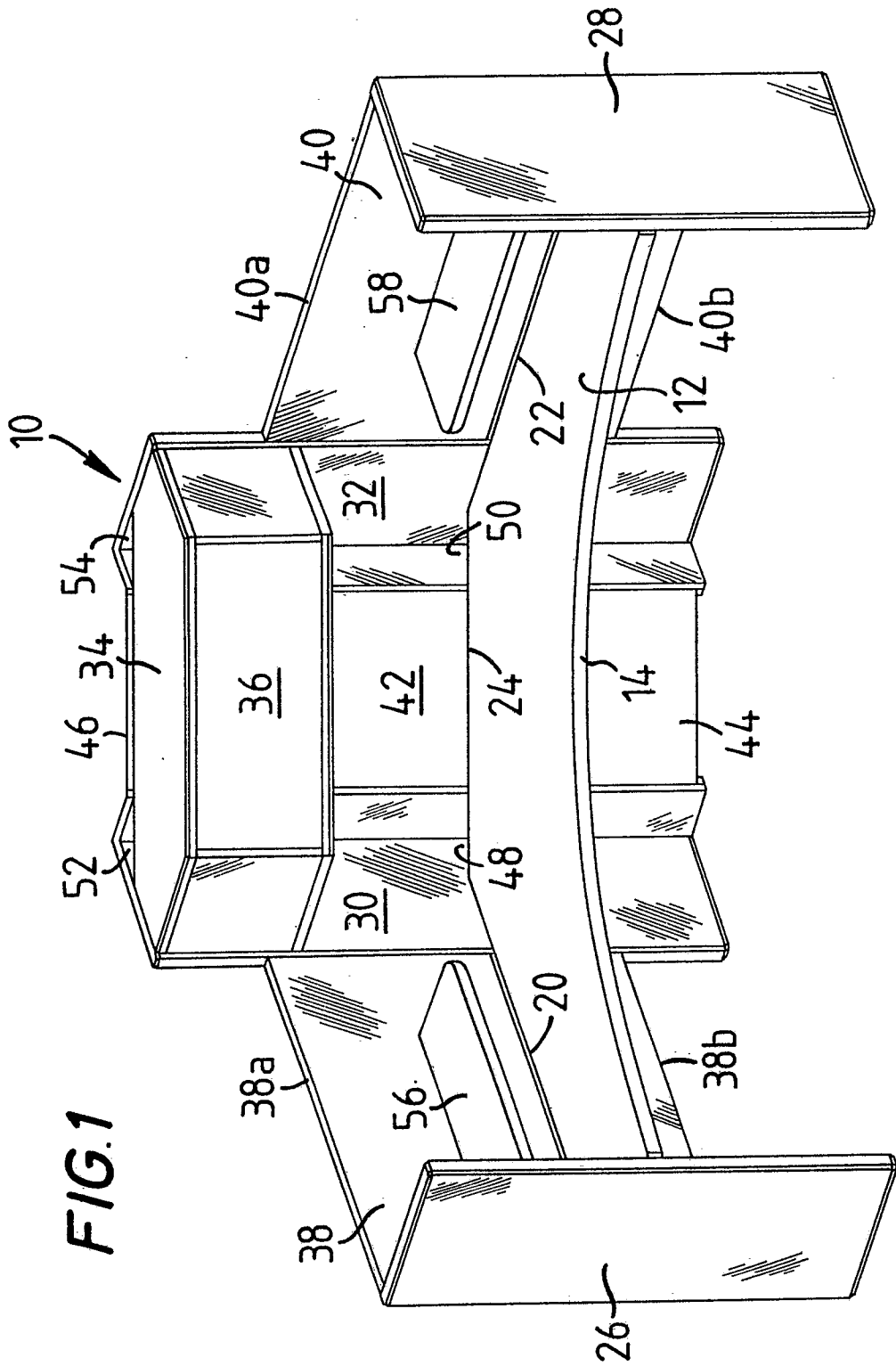
10. The limited number and small area of the "legs" of the furniture on the floor allows a large

number of floor panels to be lifted to give access to the floor voids.

portion extending to a first and second of the supports, the rear of the central portion supported by the third support, the front edge of each wing portion being angled or curved to face a seating position opposite the central portion.

Claims

1. A workstation comprising a worksurface having preferably a front edge, first and second end edges extending from the front edge substantially at right angles to each other, first and second support members fixedly secured to the worksurface in the vicinity of the first and second end edges respectively and at least one further support member fixedly secured at a further edge of the worksurface. 10
2. A workstation according to claim 1, in which said front edge has a constant, inwardly directed radius. 15
3. A workstation according to claim 1 or 2, in which the worksurface comprises first and second side edges extending from the first and second end edges respectively, substantially at right angles to the end edges and to each other and in converging directions. 20
4. A workstation according to claim 3, in which the side edges are truncated and interconnected by a rear edge to provide a cut-away or recessed rear corner. 25
5. A workstation according to claim 4, in which first and second of said further support members are provided of substantially L-shaped or right-angled cross section configuration fixedly secured to the worksurfaces in the vicinity of the junctions of the first side edge with the rear edge and the second side edge with the rear edge respectively. 30
6. A workstation according to claim 5, in which connection means is connected between the said two further support members to provide additional stability to the structure. 35
7. A workstation according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the support members extend above the worksurface to a predetermined level and first and second panels extend substantially vertically to the rear of the first and second side edges respectively from a position intermediate the floor and the worksurface to a position substantially equal to said predetermined level. 40
8. A workstation according to claim 7, comprising a third panel extending substantially vertically to the rear of said rear edge from a position intermediate the floor and the worksurface to a position substantially equal to said predetermined level. 45
9. A workstation according to claim 8, comprising a fourth panel extending substantially vertically to the rear of said third panel and in spaced relation thereto. 50
10. A workstation comprising a worksurface supported from and between three supports, the worksurface comprising a central portion and two adjacent wing portions, each wing 55



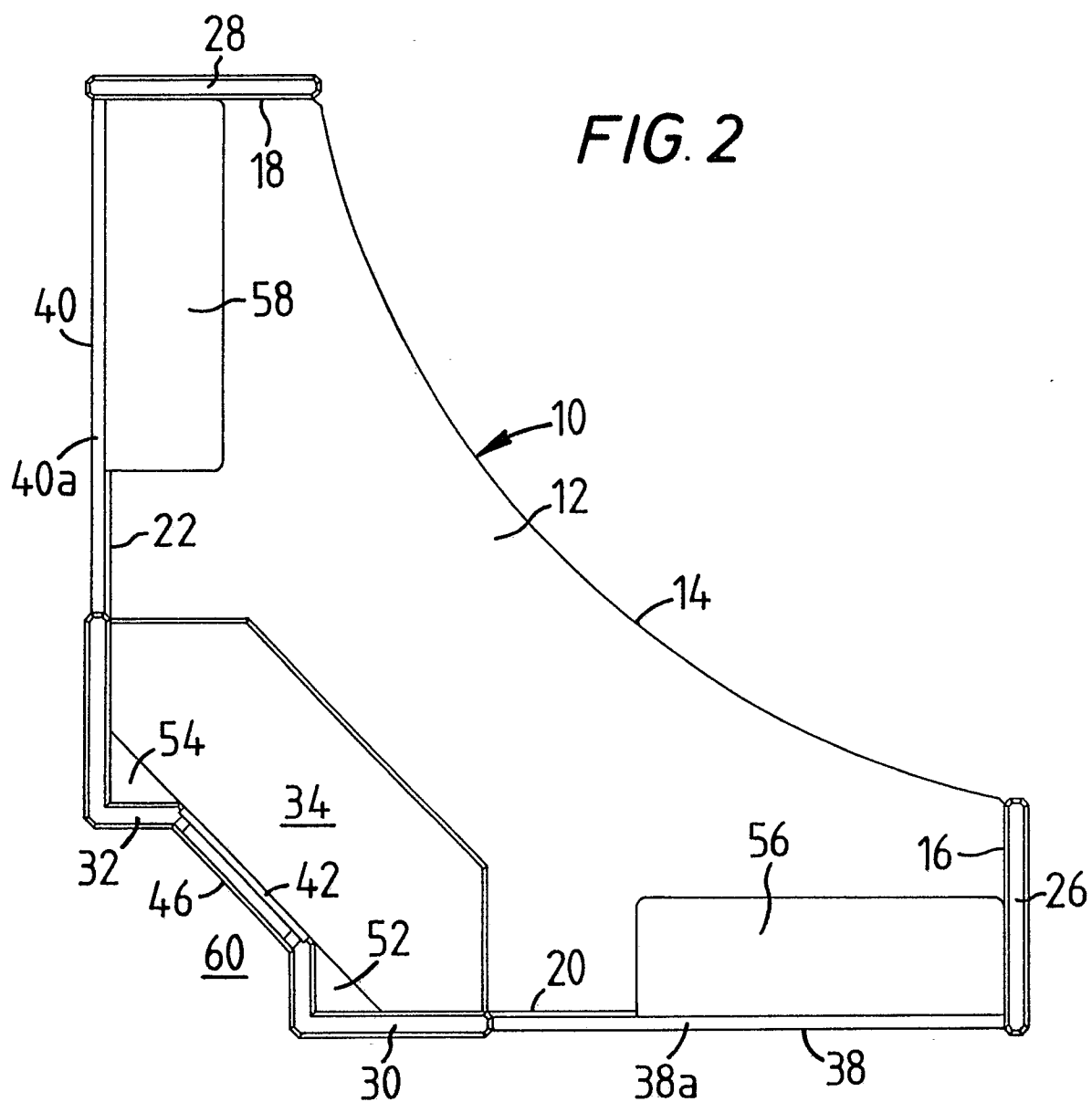


FIG. 3

